

Town of Frederick Board of Trustees



Eric Doering, Mayor

Sue Wedel, Mayor Pro Tem
Liberta Hattel, Trustee
Amy Schiers, Trustee

Tony Carey, Trustee
Gerry Pfirsch, Trustee
Jim Wollack, Trustee

AM 2009-120

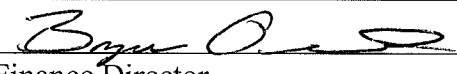
Proposed Revisions to the Municipal Code Sections for Animal Control and Proposed Fees for Animal Licenses

Agenda Date: Town Board Meeting – December 8, 2009

Attachments:

- a. Memorandum by Chief Barbour, Proposed Revisions to the Municipal Code, Chapter 7, Article V
- b. Memorandum by Chief Barbour, Proposed Fee Changes for Animal Licenses (including information about low cost spay and neuter clinics)

Fiscal Note:

Interim / 
Finance Director

Submitted by: 
Chief of Police

Approved for Presentation: 
Town Administrator

AV Use Anticipated Projector _____ Laptop _____

Certification of Board Approval:

Town Clerk

Date

Summary Statement:

At the meeting of the Board of Trustees on November 10, 2009, the upcoming 2010 year for contract services with Longmont Humane Society was discussed. There is a potential for animal control costs to increase significantly. Staff was directed to bring back information on a number of items:

- Low cost spay and neuter clinics
- Show how irresponsible owners can be made to bear the costs of sheltering strays
- A recommendation on limiting the number of animals permitted in a household
- Proposed revisions to the ordinance – show an exemption for breeders – include licensing of cats

- Costs associated with “trap, neuter and release” programs
- Estimate potential revenue from increases in fees
- Discuss the logistics of implanting tracking “chips”

Detail of Issue/Request:

1. Low cost spay and neuter clinics: There are reduced cost options available for pet owners to get their animals neutered or spayed. These offer significant savings for pet owners when compared with veterinary clinics. They are discussed in detail in the attached memorandum on “Proposed Fee Changes for Animal Licenses.”
2. Holding irresponsible owners accountable: Sec. 7-111 of the Municipal Code states that owners “shall” pay the Town for the costs that have been or will be charged the Town by the impoundment facility for impoundment, room and board and other services. This section may be viewed in the attached memorandum, “Proposed Revisions to the Municipal Code.” In the Municipal Court the penalties for a first offense are usually a fine of \$150 and it goes up for a second offense. When the costs of the shelter are added, the penalty is high.
3. Limiting the number of animals permitted per household: After further review of ordinances in other Colorado communities, staff does not recommend limiting the number of animals. The Municipal Code presently provides the authority for officers to take action where owners are allowing conditions to become unacceptable due to accumulation of waste or noise from barking dogs. In fact, this has been done in several cases. The number of animals that a person can responsibly manage is variable. One may be too many for some people while others can do a good job of caring for several more. A new section (Sec. 7-119) is proposed on this issue.
4. Proposed revisions to the ordinance: Proposed revisions are shown in the attached memorandum. Parts to be deleted or replaced are lined out. Revisions or additions are in red. Several of the revisions are to update the ordinance and replace obsolete language.
5. Costs associated with “trap, neuter and release” programs: Further research on TNR programs has resulted in a staff recommendation to not adopt any regulations for these at this time. This is one approach to the control of cat populations, and it is effective, however it requires significant participation by citizen volunteers and staff time. The feral cat population in Frederick at this time does not warrant the adoption of this program.
6. Estimate potential revenue from increases in fees: In 2009 we issued 242 dog licenses. Our system does not tell us how many were unaltered. If we were to sell the same number of licenses (242) in 2010 at \$15 each for a total that is spayed/neutered it would result in \$3,630 – an increase of \$1,210. Depending on the number of unaltered dogs and on the fee for them set by the Board of Trustees, the amount collected would be higher. We have no idea of the number of cats within the Town. Staff estimates over 2,000 cats. Staff also estimates that only 18% of dogs are licensed. If that percentage holds true for licensing of cats then there could be 420 licenses producing \$6,300. It would be more likely that fewer licenses for cats would be sold, such that 105 licenses would produce \$1,575. In 2009 we impounded 61 dogs to date (police and public brought in to the shelter). Estimating a year end total of 65 dogs. Our goal for 2010 would be to reduce the number of impounds to around 40. At \$125 per dog, that would be \$5,000 charged to the Town by the shelter. These costs would be pursued for restitution through the municipal court (Sec. 7-111 of the Municipal Code). Not all dogs would be reclaimed, if experience holds. About 75% are reclaimed, so about \$3,750 in shelter costs could be recovered.
7. Discuss the logistics of implanting tracking “chips”: In order to implant chips, the services of a veterinary clinic or animal shelter are required. Full information on the owner of the animal is

needed at the time the chip is implanted in order to create a file in the chip database. The cost of chips is usually about \$25 each.

Legal/Political Considerations:

Alternatives/Options:

1. Fees may be set at the levels specified by the Board of Trustees.
2. The Municipal Code, Sec. 7-111 has been in existence for years. Prior to the upcoming changes in the contract with Longmont Humane it was not often needed. A case in 2008 involving the owner of a dog that required emergency veterinary treatment due to being struck by a car was the last time this section was used. Under the new contract it will be used more frequently. There is also Sec. 7-115, Fees for Impounding Animals. This section imposes a fee, set by the Board of Trustees, to be paid by the owner of any animal that has been impounded. Some jurisdictions specify a higher fee for unaltered animals found to be running at large.
3. The Board of Trustees may adopt a limit on the number of animals per household. Some municipalities have limits. Other municipalities do not have limits. The problems associated with "too many animals" can usually be addressed by applying the existing requirements for picking up animal feces and controlling barking. Some jurisdictions require that additional animals above a specified limit result in added fees/permits.
4. The Board of Trustees may modify, or reject, any of the proposed revisions to the ordinance.
5. Trap, neuter and release programs are for the control of feral cat populations. There is not presently a problem in Frederick with the number of feral cats although the potential is there.
6. The feral cat trapping and neutering program is not needed at this time. If it is needed sometime in the future then the authority to engage in it will be needed.
7. Chipping of pet animals is required in some jurisdictions as a condition of licensing. There are none in Colorado that we are aware of.

Financial Considerations:

Staff Recommendation:

Staff makes the following recommendations –

1. It is recommended that cats be included with dogs under licensing requirements.
2. It is recommended that the fees for altered animals be \$15 and that the fees for unaltered animals be significantly higher, from \$95 to \$125 dollars.
3. It is recommended that the Municipal Code be revised as indicated.